

A Man's Way through
Relationships

**Learning to Love
and Be Loved**

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Las Vegas

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Chapter Ten

Sex and Sexuality

“There seems to be a huge difference between having sex and making love. Having sex is easy. Making love is like jumping over the Grand Canyon.” —Randy

Healthy Sexuality

No book about men and relationships would be worth much without a chapter exploring sex and sexuality. Each man’s sexuality is his own. It is a very personal and sacred part of who we are. I honor that and encourage you to do the same for yourself. Let me be the first to say that I am a neophyte in this area. It took me many years to get to the point where I fully understood that the act of sex is just a small part of the relationship and of our sexuality. In *Helping Men Recover*, we use the definition of sexuality that comes out of Dr. Stephanie Covington’s expertise: “the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual parts of ourselves integrated into our identities and ways of living.” According to the Sexual Health Model, also used in *Helping Men Recover*, there are ten components to creating a healthy sexuality:

1. Talking about sex
2. Culture and sexual identity
3. Sexual anatomy and functioning
4. Sexual healthcare and safer sex
5. Challenges: overcoming barriers to sexual health
6. Body image
7. Masturbation and fantasy
8. Positive sexuality
9. Intimacy and relationships

10. Spirituality

This list is included so that you can use it as a checklist in developing your own healthy sexuality. Men often joke about sex, and our public bravado often belies our insecurity, confusion, and shame. Sex is a barometer for the relationship. That is where understanding our sexuality comes into play. When we see the act of sex as part of a much greater whole, everything changes. When we are doing well emotionally and spiritually and when we are truly connected to our partner, the sex is great—explosive, connected, open, adventurous, and deeply intimate.

Roland said it well: “It’s probably one of the biggest secrets in recovery, i.e., men’s sexual acting out/fantasies/behavior, etc. I think sex is one of the most predictable ways that men compromise their recovery principles and values.” I remember attending a workshop on young people in recovery at an international recovery conference in Minneapolis, where I heard a young guy speak so beautifully about his recovery and how the principles were transforming his life. That night I went to a party on the Mississippi River and saw that same young man coming out of the woods with a young woman. She went over to her group of friends and he walked over to his friends next to me, telling them, “Oh man . . . I just got my dick sucked by that hot newcomer. She’s definitely going to stay sober now!” He laughed, and they laughed with him. As I looked over toward her I saw what seemed to be a very uneasy smile. As the other guys in his group, other supposed leaders of the young people in recovery, high-fived him, he proceeded to share some of the details. I walked away, disgusted and deeply disappointed. My guess is that the guy was a much better man than his behavior in that moment, but that nobody called him on it. And we don’t—there is far too much silence and collusion in the twelve-step community

among men regarding our sexual behavior and our immature concept of our sexuality. Jim said, “I think sex f#\$@s us up more than anything else in recovery. We need to address sexuality and the connected behavior directly if we are to recover.”

More than anything, we have to go beyond the idea that sex is only about sex acts. We overuse the anthropological justification for male hypersexuality that men are biologically driven to be promiscuous and women to be monogamous. From the perspective of evolution there may be some truth to that, but to say that it determines our choices and behavior today is foolish and a B.S. excuse that does a great disservice to men. The truth is that infidelity for men usually is a function of shame and insecurity. It is also a way for men to avoid getting too close to someone and to protect themselves from the discomfort of intimacy and vulnerability, particularly when trauma is involved. What goes on for most men beneath the surface of infidelity or involvement in multiple romantic relationships can be very different from what we tend to assume.

Since entering recovery, every man I interviewed for this book, regardless of sexual orientation, reported that sex for them included intimacy and connection. In fact, that was one of the most significant changes instigated by their recovery that the men identified in their responses to the questions in my survey: Sex was much more than just a selfish act about them “getting off.” Are we to believe that these men are so different from other men? Jim, who just happens to be gay, said this: “I had to look at sex in a more honest way after getting sober, and one of the realizations for me has been that sex is better when it is shared with someone I have feelings for and share life with. Anonymous sex could be enjoyable as an experience, but afterward I did not like the way I felt.”

The lie, reinforced by the Man Rules, is that men only think about sex, and our only interest in intimacy is through sex. We are taught very early that emotional intimacy is for girls

and sex will make you a man. That lie has destroyed many men's relationships and left us disconnected and unfulfilled.

We are also socialized to believe that women have something that men want and we have to work to get "it." We have to treat them nicely, we have to pretend that we are sensitive and have feelings, we have to act cool, and even say "those three words," all to get sex. It's a game that has been shown in hundreds of movies. And women are complicit in this dynamic as well, through flirtatious behavior, expecting men to buy them meals and presents, and sending mixed messages because of their own conflicts (I want to have sex but don't want to be called a slut, easy, promiscuous, etc.).

Helping men understand relationships is about expanding what they believe is possible. Luke, a recovering sex addict, has had to look at these issues in depth as a result of his addiction: "I had poor sexual boundaries with others before recovery. Since recovery from sex addiction, I see sex and my sexuality in the following way: (1) My sexuality is NOT an option. It is a gift and a blessing from my Creator. (2) Being sexual (or expressing myself sexually) *is* optional. I won't die if I don't have sex with myself or someone else." The solution he has found seems to speak for most of the men I interviewed, whether they identified as sex addicts or not, because in the end it is about creating a healthy sexuality.

Many of us men are confused about our sexuality and the appropriate role of sex in a relationship. The Rules have really done a number on us when it comes to sex. Are we over-sexed animals, slaves to our testosterone? No, but we were very young when we first got the message that sex is extremely important, and we kept getting that message. Like a lot of boys, I was very young (seven years old) when I saw my first pornographic magazine. From that moment, particularly because my parents knew nothing about it, I had a corrupted and confused

idea about sex, sexuality, and women. One of the men, now in his twenty-third year of recovery, who has been doing extensive trauma work shared with me his recent realization of the trauma he experienced watching a very explicit pornographic film and the effect that had on him as a child growing up in a violent and strict religious environment. Those experiences came together to create some very painful and unhealthy sexual behaviors long into his recovery. He is far from alone.

For many men, the way they first learned about sex was at the hands of an older child or adult who forced them to do and experience things sexually that ripped away a part of their soul. About one-third of the men I interviewed identified some form of sexual abuse in their history, far greater than the “one in six” statistic commonly cited for the general population. I cannot overstate the impact sexual abuse has on a man’s life and his relationships. Issues like hypersexuality, fear of sex, erectile dysfunction, and many others can plague a man and keep him from being able to develop relationships with true intimacy and connection. Many survivors of sexual trauma have intense reactions—often as confusing to them as to anyone they are with—to anything sexual. Frequently these men retreat from sex because they equate it with very negative experiences (violence, shame, abuse, secrets, control, domination, etc.).

For other men, their first experience with sex was tainted when their own parents’ shame clashed against innocent attempts to explore their sexuality, either by themselves or with a friend. For me, it was the fact that my body felt completely defective. For several years, while other boys reached puberty and talked more and more about their nascent sexual experiences, I felt great shame, not only for not having had sex, but for literally not being able to. By the time I did hit puberty, it was too late—the damage was done. The bottom line here is that surface

appearances and behaviors can be extremely deceiving, for many men have considerable confusion and pain regarding sex and sexuality.

So let's go back to the Man Rules. Among the Rules is that we are at our manliest when we are "conquering" women—when we are having as much sex as possible with as many of the hot women as possible. Think of all the other Rules inherent in that one Rule:

- Don't be gay.
- Only have sex with beautiful women.
- Always be available for sex.
- You better be able to get an erection (erectile dysfunction [ED] was previously known as impotence—as in not having power).
- Sex is about performance.
- Women are sex objects, there for our pleasure.
- If you are having sex with hot women, you are a man. If you are not, well . . .

Homophobia

The term *homophobia* was originally created to define the irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals, but it really seems to go beyond that. Homophobia is really about men's fear of men—homosexuality is just the tip of the iceberg. It certainly is a major factor in preventing us from having the kind of relationships with other men that are possible, and that so many of us, both straight and gay, want. The difference to keep in mind when thinking of our gay brothers is that while both gay and straight men may get ridiculed for being emotional and sensitive, in 2014 there are still men being ostracized, ridiculed, beaten, and even killed for being gay.

Men, gay and straight, realize that the kind of support and connection we used to think we could only get from women we can also get from men. Jim, a gay man, voiced something that I also connected to earlier in my recovery: “I have fewer women friends in recovery than I did before I got sober. I had bought into gay stereotypes and had lots of ‘girlfriends.’ As my trust level for men has grown in recovery, I find that I have more male friends.” The key is allowing ourselves to connect with those men, and for a lot of us (gay or straight) it means being honest and accountable for the homophobia that has corroded our relationships with men, and walking through it.

David talked about being in a world where one can be hated and judged for who he is. David has it twice as difficult because he is gay and African-American. I see my own homophobia rise to the surface at times, and I have to be aware of it without shame or I will miss the opportunity to see it and do something different. If I feel shame about it and cannot talk about it with men I can trust, I will continue to separate myself from others. One of the beautiful parts of the twelve-step community is that I have never seen a group of men more able to transcend the superficial labels and categories in which we place human beings.

My first best friend in recovery is a gay man, Gary, one of the interviewees for this book. One of the most important lessons he taught me was how unimportant his being gay was to our friendship, especially as we grabbed onto each other to make it through our first year of recovery. I learned a lot about my ignorance and how deeply it ran. I was also able to see that my fear of gay men had nothing to do with them and everything to do with my incredible lack of comfort with myself, my sexuality, and my sense of being a man.

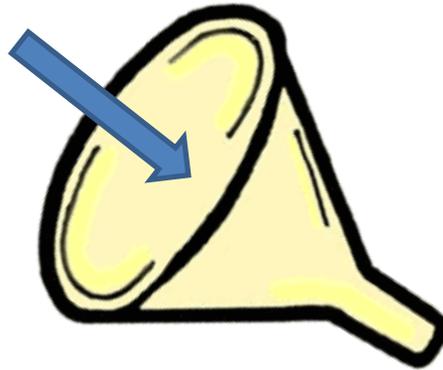
When men become healthy, they begin to think, talk, and act differently about sex. You can't mature as a man and not reflect on how sex fits into the bigger picture of your life. Mike

talked about this: “I had no idea what being a sexual man was before I got sober. It was about fulfilling my wants/desires and to hell with anything and anyone else. As my shame has reduced, as I’ve learned to identify and share feelings, and as I now understand intimacy, I have a more mature and rewarding sex life.” Becoming a healthy man in our modern society involves looking at your sexual ideas and behaviors. Examining this area of your life by taking a regular inventory is a really good idea. This is another benefit of rigorously working the Twelve Steps. When you do a thorough sexual inventory as part of the Fourth and Fifth Steps, you have to look in all of the dark corners: pornography, fear of sex, sexual abuse, nonconsensual sex, objectification of women, sex for money/drugs, homophobia, and so on. Your ability to maintain your recovery may depend on whether or not you grow in your understanding of sexuality and how it fits into your life.

The Sex Funnel

This section is about a core concept from our curriculum, *Helping Men Recover*, describing the vehicle through which so many men experience *all* forms of intimacy. After I learned about the anger funnel, it was apparent to me that there is a “sex funnel” as well. When feelings of closeness, affection, attraction, love, and connection pass through the sex funnel, they become interpreted through the lens of sex. We are mostly unconscious of it, but it affects much of how we behave in relationships. Nate talked about it this way: “The easiest thing is talking about the act of sex. The hardest thing is to talk about true intimacy, feeling loved and desired (and other components of sexuality).”

Attraction
Intimacy
Love
Closeness
Affection



SEX

If you are a heterosexual man, how many times have you felt close to another man and held back from expressing those feelings? Said differently, how many men, regardless of sexual identity, feel attraction to or affection for a man and recoil or instinctively distance themselves, if only momentarily, from the man because they are not able to separate the feeling of affection or closeness from sex? For some men it is not momentary, but rather a constant saboteur of their relationships with other men, keeping them at arm's distance or more. This is not a cognitive experience—it is rooted inside us and operates on a visceral level. But it is there for many of us, keeping us from experiencing the depth and power of connections with other men—which means it also affects our relationships with women because of the incredible pressure it puts on them to carry the weight of intimacy and emotional expression. Everybody loses out.

Women are also impacted by the idea of the sex funnel, but their experience of it is different. I don't know how much of it is nature and how much is nurture, but when I was getting married the couple leading our marriage class told us, "Women have sex when they feel loved and men feel loved when they have sex." That remains true for me, but not nearly as much as it once was. This idea resonates with other men I have spoken to as well, though they also

described it as being much truer for them prior to recovery. Once you begin to connect with all of the elements of intimacy before they go into the sex funnel, you see what Luke has discovered: “I am more present when being sexual with my wife. It’s less about what I’m going to get from her and what I can give to her. Snuggling in bed with my wife, holding her hand while walking, singing with her, or just plain sharing something fun with her is sometimes preferable or more powerful than being sexual with her.”

It takes a real man to admit that. Ricardo said it very simply: “I no longer have ‘just sex.’ I can feel everything now.” The difference for me today is that I am aware of the sex funnel operating in my life. I can feel loved outside of sex. I am learning how important it is for me to allow myself to let Nancy’s love in without connecting it to sex at all.

The Rules train us to objectify others. Sometimes it happens when thoughts of sex just seem to pop up, and when sexual feelings interfere with or otherwise change the quality of our interactions. Naturally, sexual thoughts and feelings are going to come up at times, and there is nothing wrong with that, but when we attach to them and they slip into the funnel, our focus becomes distorted and single-minded. When we create a space for men to talk about this issue, it is amazing how many men can see how often it operates in their lives.

My personal experience has been that having an awareness of the sex funnel and noticing when basic feelings of connection and intimacy are about to slide into its narrow and limiting confines, I can simply be with the feelings without judgment. This practice works with my wife as much as it does with women I meet in the trainings I conduct and conferences I attend. Whether it is thinking that sex is the connection I need from my wife or thinking that a woman who is attractive is worth more of my time than a woman I don’t find attractive, I am constantly navigating the impact of the sex funnel. Sex alone cannot create the connections I desire. When I

don't allow myself the full spectrum of feelings of intimacy I limit my relationships with women and men alike, and when that happens I limit my experience of life.

Sex Will Not Save Your Life

If I tell you that sometimes it can feel like sex will save your life, you might say, "That is silly, Dan." If that statement doesn't ring true for you, then try the opposite. How do you feel when you do not have sex? How do you feel if you perceive sexual rejection by your partner? How often do you use sex to fill some other need? If you are anything like me, it is probably a lot. Despite how much more aware I am of my tendency to look toward Nancy for sex when I really need something else, I still do it. What is the alternative? If I sit long enough with the discomfort I am feeling, I usually come to the realization that it has nothing to do with sex, or even with her.

The truth is that if your partner thinks you are only interested in being with them if it is going to lead to sex, or that you are only interested in getting off and are less concerned about their sexual needs and wants, they will disconnect. Josh said, "It's important to be in the mindset of giving and connecting." Important, yes but not always that easy. If the only channel for our sexuality is sex, our partners will start to push away, and without knowing what is happening, we personalize it without really looking at our part. Then perhaps we shut down or start acting out sexually in other ways. In any event, communication ceases.

If you are unaware of this process or unable to talk to your partner about it, you will likely continue to operate as if sex is going to solve your problems and save your life. This is like drinking water because you can't breathe—it only makes the problem worse. But when you do begin to do things differently, it will mean not only improved intimacy but better and more fulfilling sex as well. Bobby said it beautifully, especially from the perspective of those of us

grounded in the Twelve Steps: “Sex without intimacy is like sobriety without spirituality. It just ain’t. Intimacy is the goal; sex is a healthy expression, just one expression, of true intimacy.”

Cuddling? Really?

One of the hardest sentences for me to write in *A Man’s Way Through the Twelve Steps* was about how sometimes I just wanted Nancy to hold me. After ten years of marriage believing that cuddling was nothing more than Nancy’s lack of interest in sex, I realized there is something very special about cuddling. The first thing I realized about cuddling was that it really does have its place. Call it cuddling or just lying with each other, nonerotic touching, caressing, sitting close together watching TV. Call it whatever you want, but it isn’t about sex. It is about connection. It sends the message to both partners that the love you profess to have goes beyond just having someone to fill your sexual needs.

When men begin to give themselves permission to cuddle, they give themselves permission to have needs for connection beyond sex. Every man has them, but they can be very hard to identify and admit, especially under the influence of the Rules. And let’s be honest; once you have an erection, there can be a sense of urgency that can feel overpowering: *I must be relieved!* Actually, it is a very powerful discipline to not let the “little head” do all the thinking. To be able to get sexually aroused and accept that this can be its own experience and it doesn’t always have to lead to orgasm is an important realization.

Sweet, Sweet Porn

I talked briefly about porn earlier in this chapter. It is a very loaded topic. I was having a very intimate conversation with my friend Kevin the other day when the topic turned to porn:

“She says it is like having an emotional affair.” Kevin was almost incredulous that his wife could feel that way.

“Well, let me ask you. When you are upset at her or you guys are fighting, do you go to the porn instead of her?” I asked, hoping I might be able to help him explore this issue without feeling attacked or judged.

“Well, yeah.”

“And when you feel rejected or abandoned by her, do you go to the porn?”

“Well, yeah. And she told me to stop watching it because she said it was like me cheating on her, so I said I would stop. ”

“And you didn’t, right?”

“Right. Who is she to tell me what to do?”

“Okay, so that becomes an excuse for you to lie to her in your marriage? And you wonder how she could say it is like having an emotional affair?”

Imagine you are a man like Kevin and you have just had a fight with your partner. Your feelings are hurt. It hits a wound inside you from the past. You may or may not realize this. With the wound hurting, you run straight into the arms of your lover. If you’re in recovery, this used to be alcohol and/or other drugs. Now, you go into the basement and turn on your computer, or go to the closest strip joint, or maybe a massage parlor. Porn will never turn you away. Porn does not require any intimacy. Porn does not demand your vulnerability or accountability for your behavior, or for you to even communicate. You don’t need to stop and listen or acknowledge the other being who is part of the relationship.

Maybe you are a man who finds it difficult to talk about sex with his partner. You do not know how to ask for what you want. That was a very common response from the men I interviewed when I asked how comfortable they felt talking to their partners about sex. Mark said he was “moderately comfortable and improving. It is easy to ask for attention and difficult to say specifically what I need.” If you have sexual abuse in your history, it could be even more difficult. There are many other scenarios I could describe that can drive men toward using pornography: You’re new to recovery and don’t know how to talk to women or men; you were wounded as a child sexually and have never been able to be open about sex or your sexuality with another; you’re simply curious; you’re looking for something to enhance your sex life (there are couples who use porn as a way to enhance their relationship); or your partner doesn’t want to have sex as much as you do. Regardless of the reason, if porn is a secret in your relationship, it is a problem.

There is nothing wrong with masturbation in and of itself. It plays many important roles in a man’s sexuality. It can help to relieve stress, it helps men to get to know their bodies and to explore their sexuality, it takes care of our sexual desires without putting demands on our partner, and there is some evidence from research in Europe that says that men who masturbate and achieve orgasm at least four times a week greatly reduce the risk of prostate cancer. In early recovery, masturbation can be an important outlet for some men to keep them from acting out with others newly in recovery and vulnerable to the seduction of quick connections. When I first got into recovery, my sponsor, Bill, told me the three M’s would help me make it through: Meetings, Meditation, and Masturbation. However, for some men in sexual recovery, the practice of *not* masturbating is part of their recovery program. This is your journey—be thoughtful, talk to others, and honor what is important to you.

Body Image

Every man I know has some sort of struggle with body image. Today, in the media, men are assailed with reasons to feel less than and insecure about our bodies as much as women. But it takes a strong man to talk about this.

As I've described, one of the toughest issues I have dealt with in my life, let alone my most intimate relationships, has been around body image and being treated with shots of testosterone to induce puberty. That process burned into my consciousness the inherent deficiency of my body, my brokenness as a man, and my defective sexuality and led to such deep trauma that I still sometimes struggle to see myself as a man in a man's body. If you were to look at me, you would never know that. There is so much that we cannot see or know about other men by their appearance alone.

Often I still can see that scrawny prepubescent kid looking back at me in the mirror. He haunted me for twenty-five years. I know today it is called "body dysmorphia," and it's a form of the body image distortion that people with anorexia and bulimia frequently struggle with. Long into my recovery and my marriage, I struggled immensely with body image. Nancy could never understand until I sat her down and explained to her with tears in my eyes, at forty-one years old and with nineteen years in recovery, how incredibly difficult this has been for me.

Nancy knew her own struggles with body image. Like a lot of people, she didn't even think of men as having body image issues, and certainly could not imagine how I could have them because she made the mistake we make with men all the time: She was only looking at my body and not listening to me. What I've learned is that, contrary to popular belief, the majority of men struggle with some kind of body image issue because our bodies—and how strong we are, how tall we are, how muscular we are, our growing old and losing muscle mass and strength,

how well-endowed we are, and so forth—are deeply connected to how we feel about ourselves as men.

After I opened up about my body image challenges at the men’s retreat, every single one of the men talked about how my work on this area of my life resonated with them. Some of them said that they had had similar experiences and had never talked about it, or even thought about it, their whole life until that day. This experience taught me that there are a lot of men who are hurting in similar ways. In fact, every time I travel and speak about this, there are inevitably men who come up to me and talk to me about their experience, sometimes for the first time. Even if a man is “blessed” with being good-looking, tall, strong, and athletic, you never know what struggles he may have.

Let’s not avoid the most sensitive area of men’s body image: the penis. The great symbol of masculinity and strength, or so we are led to believe. If you were to do a contextual analysis, you would see that in the past ten years the number of references to a man’s penis in movies and shows, along with the suggestions that if he is not well-endowed he is less of a man and if he is well-endowed his “man card” is confirmed for perpetuity, has skyrocketed. Some women might say, “Well, now you know how it feels. We have been judged by our bodies and beauty for decades in the media. It is only fair that you experience the same opportunities for shame and self-disgust.” There is some real truth to that. But it doesn’t make it any less sad or tragic. It is no coincidence that body image, which I purposely did not ask about in my interviews for this book, only came up once, from Nate when asked about his comfort in talking about sex with his partner: “I can talk to her about sex and other topics but have had a hard time letting her know about my insecurities regarding body image and desirability.” For how many men is the essence of that statement true?

Sex, Intimacy, and Love

If you are one of those guys who spends a lot of time complaining about how little sex you get from your partner, I can guarantee you it is not just about them. In that circumstance, chances are the biggest challenge is for both partners to have an open, honest, and vulnerable conversation about their sexual desires, needs, and fears.

For those of us who have struggled with addiction, we are often disconnected from life and disconnected from our bodies. That made it difficult to experience our sexuality as something other than the act of sex. It certainly was difficult for me. With enough liquid courage, I could talk to women. With enough luck, they would be interested in me. Then it was game on. And it was a game, because it was all about winning and getting what I wanted so that I could briefly feel better about myself, with little to no real regard for the other person. Jim talked about this mentality both before and after getting into recovery: “Prior to recovery, sexuality was all about power and conquest. I was a man because I had sex with lots of people. Some of this continues in recovery, outwardly. I find there is still a great deal of posturing about sex and sex experiences—who has had sex with more people, who is more macho. Having the biggest dick means you are the biggest man type of thing.”

I was scared to death of intimacy. I had no idea what it was, but I wanted it. We all did. That was why we would find ourselves having deep conversations despite our slurred speech. That was why we would scope each other out at parties to find someone with whom we could connect. I found myself talking to prospective partners for the night about my home life, my challenges with school, my hopes and dreams. I did not see it as manipulative, but I always had

an agenda. However, I also needed to share it with someone so that I could feel a little more real. Without alcohol or some other substance, though, I was just the shadow of a man.

I wanted love, but my heart had hardened. I had no idea how much so, but twenty years of recovery have not completely healed the wounds. We have an innate human desire for love—to love and to be loved. How many times did I fall in love in college? Sometimes I'd fall in love for the night. Sometimes it was an unrequited love where I did not even have the courage to talk to the woman. But the desire for it was always there. Using sex as the sole support to meet the need for intimacy and love doesn't work. It didn't work for me, and I do not believe it works for anyone.

My experience is that sex, intimacy, and love are separate phenomena that, when brought together, are amazing. That is a big part of what my sexuality is. I describe it as having spent my life eating McDonald's hamburgers and thinking they were filet mignon. Until I actually had filet mignon, in other words, until I experienced sex in the space of love and intimacy, I had no idea how good it could be. Until I experienced love in a relationship where sex and intimacy accentuate a connection unlike anything I have ever known, I had no idea how good it could be. Guy talked about this when he said, "Sex is now not the number-one priority. Great sex is the culmination rather than the beginning of the relationship." Your sexuality, each and every component of it, can be whatever works best for you. There are no rules as long as it does not harm others.

It can take a lot of time and effort to create the synergy that occurs when sex, love, and intimacy combine, but it is well worth it. And until you have experienced it, you really have no idea what you are missing. Larry summed up the process of developing a healthy sex life beautifully: "Safety, then intimacy, then sex."

Into Action

- Please answer the following questions in your notebook:
 - What do I think sex is for?
 - How do I use my sexuality in a healthy way?
 - How do I use my sexuality in an unhealthy way?
 - How have I harmed others sexually?
- Take some time right now to think about how the sex funnel shows up in your life.
 - What happens to you when you experience affection for another man?
 - What happens when you connect in conversation with an attractive woman or man (depending on your sexual identity)?
- Set up a time to talk to your partner about your sex life. Be clear about what you want to discuss. Ask them ahead of time to write down answers to the following questions. You do the same.
 - What do you like the most?
 - What would you like to be different?
 - What would you like to try sexually that you have never tried?
 - On a scale of one to ten, one being completely dissatisfied, how satisfactory is the frequency of sex?
 - What scares you the most about sex?
 - What else do you need to feel satisfied with your sex life?
- What is your relationship to pornography? Answer the following questions:
 - How old were you when you saw your first pornography?

- How often do you use pornography now?
- What is happening in your relationship when you turn to porn?
- What does your partner know about your use of porn? If they do not know, why not?
- What is your experience with erotica versus pornography?

Advanced Into Action

- When you are with your partner and you get sexually aroused, make a conscious decision not to engage in sex.
- Ask your partner to hold you when you feel scared, insecure, or sad, and don't have it turn to sex.